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AUTHOR Witkovski, Ruth; Bedrosky, Nannette
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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how the Creighton University Health Sciences Library Serial Department has updated their process of claiming and replacing missing journal issues. The paper is divided into two main parts. The first part discusses the changes in the claiming procedure. The second part discusses how the claims are reported to vendors. Future efforts will include direct electronic connections with vendors. Evaluation for a new automated library system will include looking at how the different vendors and their electronic systems are set up to report claims, and how publishers are communicating issue availability and publishing schedules directly to libraries. (Author/SWC)

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SERIAL CLAIMING: THE FASTER THE BETTER
FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT AND ONWARD TO THE FUTURE

Ruth Witkovski: Serials Coordinator

Nannette Bedrosky: Technical Services Librarian

Creighton University Health Sciences Library/Learning Resource Center

Omaha, Nebraska

ABSTRACT

This presentation will discuss how the Creighton University Health Sciences Library Serial Department has updated their process of claiming and replacing missing issues. The presentation is divided into two main parts, the first part discusses the changes in HSL/LRC claiming procedure. The second part is a discussion of how the claims are reported to the vendors.

For the future, we are looking into direct electronic connections with vendors and how the different vendors and how their electronic systems are set up to report claims. We are also interested in the movement of how publishers are communicating issue availability and publishing schedules directly to libraries.

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HISTORY OF CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY

Twenty years ago (1977) when the Bio-Information building was built, five department libraries were merged to form what is now called Health Sciences Library/Learning Resource Center (HSL/LRC). They were the department libraries for Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing, and the library from St. Joseph Hospital. It was at the time of the merger that Ruth Witkovski became part of the HSL/LRC staff. Nannette Bedrosky joined the staff in 1978 part time in the reference department. A year later she moved to the Technical Services Department full time.

PROCESSING SERIALS CLAIMS BEFORE AUTOMATION

Kardex

During the time period between 1977 - 1987 all the serials information was housed in a Kardex. A Kardex consisted a series of stackable drawers containing up to fifty pockets in each drawer. All the information pertaining to a serial title was placed on two cards specifically designed to record Serial data. To obtain any information about a specify title you had to flip through the Kardex until you found the entry for that title. As each an issue was checked in it was viewed to see if all the previous issues had arrived as the publisher predicted or if one needed to be claimed. If the previous issue was missing we would claim the issue immediately. This was the easiest way to check for missing issues. Two other very important resources that still report missing issues are the patrons and our staff. The only way to be sure that all the subscription titles were coming in was to flip through each page of the Kardex to see if there was anything to claim. During the first three months of the year other factors needed to be added to the list of things to be checked, they were new subscriptions, late renewals, and delayed titles.

At first the checking periods were done at random, but because we had no set period for searching for missing issues some were claims were reported late and some publishers would refuse to send a replacement copy so we had to turn to other sources to obtain the issue.

Color Coding

Identifying claims became easier when Ruth learned about a system called color coding which uses the publishing frequency of the titles to set up a system to search the Kardex. This system consisted of assigning a different color to each publishing frequency, such as blue for Weekly, red for Monthly, yellow for Bi-Monthly, and on down the line of the main frequency patterns. A set time period was assigned to each colored frequency. For instance every second week search all blue's, every fourth week all blues and reds were searched and so on until all the colors were searched. Once each quarter we would search all titles and claim any that were missed, or process reclaims on the ones that still had not come in.

PROCESSING CLAIMS AFTER AUTOMATION

Before Serials Module

In the fall of 1985 the HSL/LRC purchased the library automation system called PALS. By January of the next year the on-line catalog (OPAC) and Circulation Modules came on-line. The item records were attached to the OPAC bibliographic records after the Serial titles had been produced on OCLC and uploaded by tape into PALS.

Since the serials module was not punched at this time we had to find a way to enter the active titles into the OPAC. It was decided that we would go in the "back door" and enter all new issues using the LIR command (load item record). Using this method of entering new arrivals we had to look for a new way to identify missing issues. Basically there are two ways to search for each title, either by using the title or the ISSN number. After many false tries at setting up a system for searching for missing issues we came up with a list that consisted of all the active titles with their

OCLC record numbers. It was then easy to set up time periods to search the list based on the former color code system..

After Serials Module

With the purchase of the Serials Module in 1989 identifying claims became much easier. PALS generates a new serial claims report which we have set up to receive once a week. At first it seemed logical to leave all the current claims on the list even after we had claimed them with the vendor. But the list kept getting longer and longer each week so we had to do some more reading on how the system handled claims, and discovered that we had to send a SSC command (send serial claims) to PALS. PALS then generates two lists one of the new claims generated during that week, and one consisting of the titles we had claimed the previous week.

Each new claim list is checked for any false claims. A false claim is a claim that is generated by PALS, when an expected issue is checked in that doesn't exactly match what the record said was expected, or the expected issue might be delayed and the expected date has not been changed to reflect the delay. Another way a false claim can be generated is when a combined issue arrives and the system is expecting only one number for the issue. Whatever the reason for a false claim they must all be identified and cleared before the SSC command is sent. The serial subsystem has cut down the time spent identifying the claims so they can be reported to the vendors.

REPORTING CLAIMS TO VENDORS

Majors Before Automation

The process of reporting missing issues to our vendors has also changed through the years. For many years Majors Scientific Subscriptions was our serials jobber. Before 1990 we reported claims to them either by phone or by US mail.

When Majors received the claims they would send the information onto the publishers either by mail or phone call if the publisher was in the US. This took time and if the publisher had

problems with the claim the claimed issues it could take up to three or more months to receive the claimed issue.

Majors After Automation

In 1990 Majors developed an on-line system they call Majors On-line Resource (MORE). One part of the system was devoted to Serials, and serials claiming. We could access MORE by telnet. One nice feature of MORE, that we have not encountered with any other vendor on-line systems, was that if the library had a claim on the title being searched the system would notify you that there was a claim already and list what it was. This gave you the option to reclaim at that time or create a new claim. Being able to do claims electronically shortened the turn around period it takes the library to receive an issue. In 1995 Majors sold their journal subscription section to EBSCO so we transferred most of our subscriptions to them.

EBSCONET®

EBSCO had an on-line system that could be accessed by telnet. This system was broken up into many sections which made it hard to get all the information you needed on a title, or to claim an issue, so we continued to report claims by phone, mail, and when the Facsimile machine came along ,by Fax to our Accounts Representative in Denver, Colorado. If we had time we went onto EBSCONET® to check if the title in question had a chick in history attached to the record. Since EBSCO was just enlarging their database to include more Medical titles we found that very few Medical titles had check-in histories. In 1996 EBSCO brought up the existing version of EBSCONET® on the World Wide Web, but it was still very hard to get to the information needed.

EBSCONET® 2.0

Early in 1997 EBSCO created an all new Web version of EBSCONET®. EBSCONET® 2.0 which is much easier and faster to use. We now use the web to do all of our first time claims. The claims go electronically directly to EBSCO's headquarters in Birmingham, Alabama. EBSCO then batches all the claims to each of their publishers once a week and transmits the claims

electronically to the publishers. This has shortened the turn a round time for receiving an issue to on the average of three to eight weeks. But no matter how prompt a claim is generated we are never one hundred percent successful in receiving all issues.

Obtaining Missing and Lost Issues

While preparing this paper it has been reinforced how important it is to identify and claim missing and lost issues as soon as possible and take action. With the Serial budgets being stretched to the brink it is even more important to replace these issues free from the publishers since they have already been paid for. We have other ways of obtaining paper copies of needed issues when the publisher can not supply the requested issue. It is the policy of HSL/LRC to replace copies with paper issues if at all possible. The sources we use are: EBSCO's Missing Copy Bank (current one year), Backserve (listserver on the internet: [for the price of postage they will send the requested issue]), Back Issue Jobbers , Publishers, and donations from our patrons. If we can not find the needed issue in print we will then search the University Microform Inc. catalog to see if they have the title on microfiche. When we make a one time only purchase in microfiche we must order the title for the whole year.

THE FUTURE

The Serials world, has seen many changes in 1997, either just being implemented or on the verge of becoming a reality. With so many changes coming so fast the publishers are having some problems in keeping up with their publishing schedules which is reflected in an increase in serial claim, and delayed publications.

The future for HSL/LRC will see some kind of direct electronic claiming, some integrated systems have this capability today. Direct electronic claiming means that you do not have to take the information off one system and key it into another system cutting down on the amount of incorrect information being reported to a publisher.

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Creighton has begun the process of selecting a new automated library system to be purchased within the next three years. Some of the things we will be evaluating will be the Serials Module and how it treats claims and its capability to communicate electronically with vendors and publishers. We are also evaluating the changes the vendors are making electronically, their connections with the publishers, and how they report the information from the publishers back to their clients.

The ideal situation would be a direct reply from the publisher, via internet, to the library making the claim.

Electronic technology is improving all the time and it is greatly impacts the Serials field especially now with the development of Electronic Journals (a paperless media). The E-Journal will challenge the Serials Librarian with a whole new set of problems. But checking and claiming missing issues will always be with us no matter in what form the journal is published.